

## WORDS-WORDS-WORDSBhante Vimalaramsi wrote:

Dhamma Greetings all,

Here are some definitions for commonly used words. Hope you find them useful. This is from some of KK's notes.

Maha-Metta 2u

Always,

Bhante Vimalaramsi

## WORDS-WORDS-WORDS

If you are examining this information, just for today, pretend you don't know what these words mean and just for now, try to create a beginner's mind, start at the beginning and consider these definitions as the proper "working definitions" as you approach the subject of meditation. Later when reading the suttas you will be amazed at the clearer understanding you have and the difference you will experience.

This request is set forth here because it appears that one of the major set-backs in making significant progress today for meditators has been the wishy-washy definitions that have been given for the primary words needed to practice and understand the meditation properly. Much of this has been caused by the inadequacy of presentations given with English as a second language. It is the state of things at this time.

Take a look:

### 1. MEDITATION (Bhāvanā):

It helps to have a clear working definition of Meditation to start out with so you understand what you are going to do, how to do it and why are going to go to do it? These definitions are really good working definitions to memorize and keep with you as you go on your journey.

*Meditation (bhāvanā) is "watching how mind's attention moves (anicca) moment-to-moment in order to see clearly the Four Noble Truths and the true nature of HOW the pattern of Dependent Origination occurs."*

### 2. MINDFULNESS (Sati):

After reading books upon books on meditation and never finding out what mindfulness is, or what the student is supposed to "remember" it should be very evident to every teacher that a workable definition is very badly needed. This definition came into being, after several years of practicing and refining it to have the fewest words possible and being able to apply it to the most situations across the board. It works in the meditation wherever you apply it.

*Mindfulness (Sati) is "the act of remembering to recognize and release any distraction that pulls one's attention away from the meditation object."*

The trick here is to keep mindfulness going ALL THE TIME. With this definition, when a person says to you, "are you being mindful?" this means "are you watching where mind's attention is and what it is doing?" One then stops and checks and releases whatever is arising, relaxes all tension, and then returns to the object of meditation.

### 3. COLLECTEDNESS VS CONCENTRATION:

*COLLECTEDNESS (Samādhi) describes the quality of observation while observing the movements of mind's attention.*

This is not the same as Concentration. To use the word concentration, here in the West, has led to headaches, tinnitus, and vertigo problems amongst practitioners who get into too deep of a level of concentration. It should be noted that this kind of one-pointed concentration was abandoned by the Buddha with his earlier teachers. In the west we grow up concentrating very hard and we are goal oriented and pretty serious. To tell us to

concentrate brings on a hardened approach that does not lead to happiness and tranquility or to the results we seek. Instead it narrows and sometimes hardens the mind to the extent we can't consider other alternatives anymore. Thus we continue to struggle for years upon end for we know not what. Some teachers have backed off and tried saying "unified mind" to ease up a little. But the idea of a "collected mind" (Samādhi) works very well to reach the level we need for the observation we are going to do.

#### 4. CRAVING (Taṇhā) and CLINGING (Upādāna)

There is a very important difference in Craving and Clinging. One of the most dangerous things to have happened today was introducing the word "grasping" which so many people have come to use in place of "craving and clinging". This is not good practice because it cheats the student out of an opportunity to investigate specifically the difference in these two links for themselves.

*CRAVING (Taṇhā) manifests as a slight tension and tightness in mind and in body as a Feeling is arising and moving into the craving link. ( usually indicated on the sides of the head or at the base of the skull in the back)*

At this point, Craving manifests as the "I like it" or the "I don't like it" mind. Of course this is equivalent to the "I want it" or attachment and tension of pulling to you; OR it can be equivalent to the "I don't want it" and aversion and tension of pushing away. On either side of the coin, the tension is equal and needs to be released.

CLINGING (Upādāna) on the other hand is conditioned by that link we just called Craving. Immediately following this action, clinging is the rising up in mind of the "story of WHY I do or do not like it", whatever has just arisen.

*CLINGING (Upādāna) is the chatter that follows craving as one gets involved with this story about why you like or dislike what has arise and the thoughts stream out from there.*

Most important to understand is that within *CRAVING link is where "personality first appears as I!"* Atta or (idea of a self). It is here that the idea of a self raises its head and gets involved.

To put the two links of Craving and Clinging together was never intended by the Buddha and it takes away the opportunity for the student to sort this out as their sensitivity develops properly and their awareness sharpens during the meditation so they can actually observe these links happening through noticing subtle tensions arising simultaneously.

As we all know the Buddha said that *CRAVING* is at the root of suffering. It's the weak link in the cycle. If one can *RELEASE* whatever is arising when just beginning to identify this point of craving, then one can experience a brief cessation of suffering as the tension falls away. However you must remember that if one stops the chatter of *CLINGING*, one has not reached the summit but rather a false peak! Do not be deceived. One has *NOT* abandoned the *CRAVING*. It is "with craving as condition, clinging arises." This is key to understand. For this reason, it's important to keep the two links as they are taught in the texts; clearly "two" separate links, and go on with the training.

So to summarize this:

*CRAVING (Taṇhā) manifests as tightness and tension in mind and body as it arises.*

*Craving is where Personality first arises with "I" like it, or, "I" don't like it" labeling a feeling that arises.*

*CLINGING (Upādāna)- is the run- on story that comes up for the student in their mind about "Why" they like or dislike whatever arose...*

#### 5. SAMATHA (SERENITY) and VIPASSANĀ (INSIGHT)

What needs to be said about these two is brief. In the suttas these two were NEVER separated into two meditations. There are many examples of early followers in the suttas doing a meditation where they are in the jhanas while fully aware. It is very clear that Serenity and Insight occur together here. (see MN-111) This was unique to Buddhist meditation.

*SAMATHA and VIPASSANĀ were yoked together.*

Since it was presented so widely, I decided to give the position of "separation of these two" a fair chance to prove itself out in the suttas. Checking out the two topics throughout the index of the entire Majjhima Nikaya it was found that the same pages and sections were cited for both topics and *In all instances they appeared as*

*"SERENITY AND INSIGHT" within the texts! Neither appeared alone, ever!* So to follow the instructions in the suttas for the meditation it is logical to assume that the practice was done in this way: with serenity and insight yoked together. By doing this the experience begins to deepen and to make total sense in conjunction with other sutta materials.

6. SAMĀDHI – In the dictionary by Rhys Davies, he notes something about this word; he tells us that the word Samadhi was never used before the time of the Buddha and that the Buddha made this word up to talk about this particular kind of meditation that he discovered.

The Buddha used this word to mean Tranquil or Quiet Wisdom and when we use this definition while reading the texts, they become clear.

7. JHĀNA - The word *jhāna* means "level of understanding". Jhana was not indicated as being a separate practice of meditation but rather occurred within the regularly taught meditation if the instructions within the suttas were followed precisely. The states we reach while passing through various jhanas are not equivalent to the attainment of Nibbana as assumed and advertised by some people today.

There are two forms of jhāna and it helps to understand them clearly. The form the Buddha was practicing was a Serenity-Insight (Samatha-Vipassanā) meditation with full Awareness or (Sampajjana). The other form of jhana was a one-pointed form of concentration that leads to absorption without full awareness, where the deeper insights cannot take place clearly. The absorption type was what he experienced with his two teachers previous to his enlightenment and which he laid aside.

Today there is a lot of absorption type meditation being taught with a division of Serenity and Insight and people are getting frustrated about their progress. Following many, many years of practice, people are not experiencing what is written about in the texts. But with a slight tweak in understanding, adding back a few ingredients to the recipe, a little different approach, and a little determination, all of their training and discipline can pay off as they begin to experience these deeper states with a clear awareness.

8. SAMPAJAÑÑĀ – Full Awareness. This was the nature of the Buddha's meditation practice while in sitting meditation, while in walking meditation, and all the time. Full awareness of what? Full awareness of the movements of mind's attention.

9. NIRODHA- CESSATION- Nibbāna. Everyone agrees that the practice is about the cessation of suffering. The question arises, the cessation of what? Suffering has its root in Craving. Craving manifests as "tension and tightness" explained above under the definition of Craving. Tension is the 'cause' of the 'condition' of Stress. Stress is today being identified as the 'cause' of both mental and physical dis-eases. The dis-ease is seen during the meditation and is noted, up close, as the tension which actually is the contraction of muscles in the brain, face, body as the craving arises. **RELEASING** any arising feeling and **RELAXING** all tension and tightness lets go of this contraction.

It has been said by some teachers that Nibbana, by definition, is "the absence of all movement of mind". This fits in because 'movement is also the contraction of the muscles within the brain'. By ceasing this movement, one reaches a momentary cessation.

There are 2 kinds of Cessation. Momentary cessation is known to be the Mundane Nibbāna and Super-Mundane Nibbāna which is much bigger and lasts longer which is a part of our final goal.

The Mundane Nibbāna can happen often for us to observe during our practice and we can see it if we understand what to look for.

The Super-Mundane Nibbāna occurs following Nirodha Samāpatti (cessation of perception and feeling) and lasts a bit longer. It's the one we have all heard about before.

The gist of this is that Mundane Cessations occur at the point where the meditator **RECOGNIZES** arising phenomena; **RELEASES** whatever is arising and **RELAXES** (tranquilizes) all excess tension and tightness in body and mind. At that moment, between **RELAXING** and as they are **RETURNING** mind's attention over to

the object of meditation, there is a point of what has been called Pure Mind, absolutely clear mind or Still-Point. This is only a momentary cessation! It's real! It can be observed! This is the mundane Nibbāna. To see this brings real confidence to the practitioner concerning the entire Teaching. Zeal arises beyond the normal Faith one usually has because one comes to realize that Nibbāna as a state IS REAL.

10. IGNORANCE (Avijjā)- means not understanding the Impersonal Process of Dependent Origination and the 4 Noble Truths.

11. EKAGGATĀ—means unified mind. Found by breaking down the Pali word as EKAGGA= Tranquil + TA-brought together.

12. WISDOM (Paññā):

*Wisdom means seeing clearly the impersonal process of Dependent Origination.*

If every time we see the word WISDOM mentioned in any form throughout the texts, we first consider that reference is being made directly concerning 'the process of dependent origination', then we will find new meaning in reading the texts.

The word wisdom is found in many contexts:

As in

"And his taints were destroyed with his seeing with wisdom"

"He sees with wisdom"

"He is wise"

Just the word wisdom by itself anywhere should be considered first as being in this context unless it's very obviously referring to something else.